

Message from the President

Welcome back to another school year! The fall is always a very busy time as we get back in our school routines and prepare for the hectic holiday season. I know most of you barely have the time to look at the newsletter, never mind read the fine print. However, there is so much going on at RISPA right now, that you really should at least scan through the areas below... or better yet, come to a monthly Board meeting (ALL are welcome) to experience it yourself. We meet on the second Wednesday of every month at 5pm at Winman Junior High School in Warwick. For the past several Board meetings, we have had new faces each time. Thank you to those who have ventured out, and we look forward to meeting many more of you!

RISPA UPDATES

School Psychology Awareness / Advocacy

This is an area that I have tried to focus on since the start of my presidency last fall. It is so critical for us to promote our profession, not only to save jobs, but also to help advocate for the children in our schools. On a daily basis, school psychologists engage in activities to improve the learning environment in our schools, help students achieve their potential, and assist families in connecting with the services they need (just to name a few of our roles)! In order to learn more about school psychology advocacy, RISPA held a leadership forum (led by NASP Government and Professional Relations Committee) on June 30, 2009. From this day-long workshop, we developed a state advocacy plan. Consequently, RISPA now has a Professional Advocacy Committee that is working on ways to raise awareness of school psychology throughout the state, including sending out press releases and contacting key legislators. The committee is also in the process of planning a Celebration of School Psychology event during School Psychology Awareness Week (November 9-13th). If you are interested in getting involved on the Professional Advocacy Committee, please contact Chris Willis at drchriswillis@cox.net. Any help is appreciated!

RISPA Membership Listserv

The RISPA Membership Listserv is a great way for school psychologists to learn about RISPA news and important updates as well as to communicate and collaborate with colleagues. Recently, a Q&A was posted on the listserv to explain to members how the system works – see inside this newsletter for more information. If you are a current RISPA member but not receiving listserv email messages, please email me (kpristawa@cox.net) to let me know. You may not have given us an email address when you renewed your membership or your current email address may be filtering out our postings.

Professional Development

Over the past several months, we have offered some worthwhile professional development opportunities, including a summer conference with Jim Wright and an early fall workshop on ethics with Dr. Gary Stoner. In addition, by the time you read this, our annual fall conference, this year with Dr. Ross Greene as presenter, will have come and gone. Know that other exciting professional development opportunities are in the works, including a spring conference with Dr. Amanda VanDerHeyden as well as the possibility of a workshop on technology for school psychologists. RISPA will also try to continue to offer workshops at a significantly reduced rate for members. It is our way of “giving back” to you!

I-Plan Study Groups

As a result of RISPA's recent collaboration with the RI Department of Education, we organized a monthly study group for school psychologists to attend in order to learn from their colleagues and earn hours towards their I-Plan goals. This year, the monthly study groups will be focusing on RTI at the secondary level. We have only had one meeting, but it was very helpful to hear what middle and high schools throughout Rhode Island are (or are not) doing with RTI. We will be meeting on the second Wednesday of every month at 6pm, right after the Board meetings. (Exception: November's meeting was moved to Wed. Nov. 4th due to the holiday on the 11th.) If you are interested in joining us at anytime, please email Melissa Dingley (who has kindly agreed to facilitate/organize our meetings!) at mdingley@cox.net.

As always, I want to hear from YOU. What can RISPA do to help you in your schools? How can RISPA give back to the school psychology community? Please feel free to email me anytime with your ideas at kpristawa@cox.net.

I hope you all have an enjoyable and productive school year,

Kim

Kim Aguiar Pristawa